

SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT THROUGH **LBS PROGRAMMING**

BY LAUBACH LITERACY ONTARIO

The Ontario Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program provides excellent value for money, accounting for a fraction of the overall Employment Ontario budget, while supporting a significant number of adult learners to gain the skills they need to seek or maintain employment opportunities. The LBS program is designed for people who need to upgrade their essential skills across a range of long-term goals but focuses on those who are **most in need of service**. LBS targets clients with a range of suitability criteria such as less than a grade 12 education, in receipt of income support, out of school or training for more than six years, having a history of interrupted education, or a disability. For example, the most current available data¹ tells us:

- 44% of participants have less than a grade 12 or OAC education
- 24% of participants' highest level of education is grade 12 or OAC
- 12% have self-identified with a disability

On average, more than one third of the learners served have a goal of employment or apprenticeship. The LBS program also supports learners on the independence,

secondary school credit or post-secondary pathways.

The LBS program is unique in that the competency-based framework used allows for flexible client-centred programming and innovative approaches. The program is ready and able to respond to current and future needs of the labour market. For example, targeted training linked to local labour market needs can help fill the mismatch between skills needed by employers and current skill gaps in the available workforce. Many service delivery agencies are responding to local needs by developing targeted training programs that integrate soft skills, essential skills (e.g. basic literacy, numeracy, digital skills) and technical skills identified for specific occupations or groups of occupations.

One service delivery agency developed the targeted training learning series "GET SET for Office Administration". This innovative approach was a response to research on local labour market information, requests from employment services, and the implementation of a new certificate program (Office Administration) being offered by a local community college. The learning series incorporates the "SET" skills (soft skills,

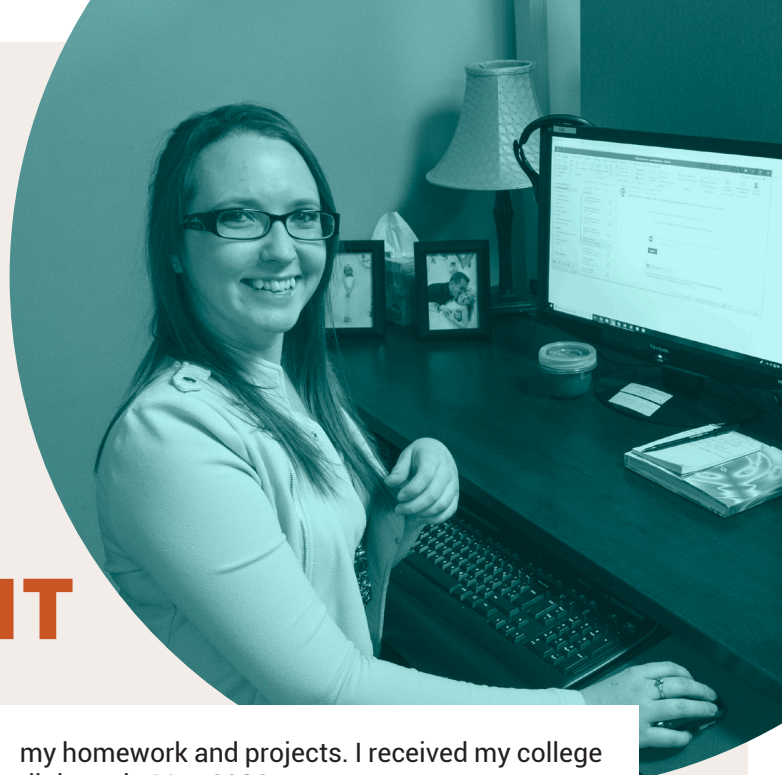
essential skills and technical skills) required by office administration positions. As part of this series, an "experiential learning" component was included where learners perform actual office administration tasks in a real office setting over two "practical days". Since April 2018, 20 participants have completed the program. Upon completion, 100% of the learners indicated that as a result of participating, their employment situation had improved and they felt better prepared to find and maintain employment.

The LBS program isn't just for those who are unemployed. The most recent data for Ontario² tells us that approximately 59% of participants are unemployed but more than 30% are attached to the labour market in some capacity (full-time, part-time, self-employed, or under-employed). Another example of the value of the program flexibility is the delivery of training options to support the upskilling of those currently working so they are able to maintain or improve employment opportunities. LBS is an effective and efficient program that provides a diversity of options to support adult learners on their journey to gain or improve employment across the province.

¹ Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Report Ontario. Retrieved November 6, 2018, from http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/programs/lbs_regional_lsp_prev.html

² Ibid.

FROM VOLUNTEERING TO EMPLOYMENT



I heard about the Centre Moi j'apprends from my mother, who was and continues to be a client. In September 2009, I registered in the French class to improve my writing skills, and in several additional courses such as "Estime de soi" (Self-esteem) and "Savais-tu que?" (Did you know?).

These courses helped me learn new writing techniques and acquire new knowledge and skills in French. I also made many friends through the centre. My goal as a learner was to continue my studies at La Cité collégiale. However, I had to leave school in March 2010 because I was pregnant with my daughter.

I went back to college in September 2014 in the two-year recreational services techniques program (Techniques des services en loisirs). During my studies, I took advantage of the Centre Moi j'apprends' services in order to do some of

my homework and projects. I received my college diploma in May 2016.

A few months after graduating, I decided to volunteer at the Centre Moi j'apprends as an assistant adult educator. This allowed me to put my new knowledge into practice and helped me better prepare for entering the workforce.

After volunteering at the centre for two years, I was offered a part-time position by the director. Soon afterwards, I also obtained a part-time administrative position at the Coalition ontarienne de formation des adultes (COFA).

I am very thankful to the staff at the Centre Moi j'apprends for encouraging me to achieve my goals. Today, I am very proud to be employed at the Centre Moi j'apprends and at the COFA.

Julie Nadon

WHAT ONTARIO'S ADULT LITERACY LEARNERS SAY:

"In my literacy class, I'm getting the help I've always needed. I'm doing better than I ever have in the past. I plan to get my GED and get a better job for myself down the road."

Find out more about the state of literacy in Ontario: Get CLO's updated 2018 **"More Than Words Can Say – Literacy: Why It Matters"** today.

TRANSITIONING FROM ESL TO LBS TO EMPLOYMENT

BY OTTAWA CARLETON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD'S LBS PROGRAM

Simone is a Childcare Assistant with the English as Second Language/Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (ESL/LINC) Childcare Program at Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

Simone was a kindergarten teacher in Haiti before coming to Canada as a refugee. After arriving in Canada, she lived with her husband and child in a shelter for nine months. During this time, she and her husband attended ESL classes.

Simone's English improved to the point where she could enter the Literacy Basic Skills Workplace Training Program to learn to be a Childcare Assistant. She was in her element, loving the opportunity to learn about childcare in Canada as well as gaining experience in the practical placement component of the program.

Simone volunteered in the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board's ESL/LINC Childcare Program following her graduation from the LBS Childcare Assistant program and applied to be on the supply list. It wasn't long before she secured a part-time position and is now happily employed full time as a Childcare Assistant.

Simone is proud of what she has accomplished and grateful that her training generated gainful employment. Her income coupled with her husband's has allowed her family to cease receiving social assistance. They have expanded their family with a son and feel proud to be creating a life for their family in Canada.



MORE THAN WORDS CAN SAY

Literacy: Why It Matters

BY COMMUNITY LITERACY OF ONTARIO

In celebration of International Literacy Day 2018, Community Literacy of Ontario is pleased to present "Literacy: Why It Matters" to showcase the importance of literacy to our province, and to share the intersections between literacy, health, poverty, employment, the economy, and more. These are issues that matter, and they impact Ontario's citizens and our province in profound ways.



Literacy Skills in Ontario

Literacy is an essential skill in 21st century Ontario. However, many people in our province do not have the literacy skills that they need for home, work, and life. In fact, 1 in 6 (or 15%) of Ontarians aged 16 to 65 scored at, or below, Literacy Level 1. People scoring at this level struggle with very serious literacy challenges, and have trouble reading even the most basic text.¹

A further 32% of Ontarians scored at Literacy Level 2, meaning they can read, but with difficulty and will likely have problems with basic forms and directions encountered in everyday life such as employment or rental agreements, medication instructions, and more.¹

"Today I can say I can read and write and no longer do I avoid and hide from the world."



Numeracy Skills in Ontario

Numeracy skills are an even more significant challenge for the 22% of Ontarians aged 16 to 65 who scored at, or below, Numeracy Level 1. People scoring at this level have very limited math skills. In addition, 31% of Ontarians scored at Numeracy Level 2. This means that they have difficulty accomplishing commonly needed numeracy tasks.²

In total, 53% of Ontarians have less than Level 3 numeracy skills. According to Employment and Social Development Canada and the Conference Board of Canada, people require at least Level 3 numeracy skills to function well in modern Canadian society.²

"I can do my own work: grocery shopping, banking and being more independent. In the future I hope to become a great person and also to get a good job."



Literacy and Poverty

The relationship between literacy skill levels and the likelihood of living in poverty is strong. In Canada, 46% of adults at the lowest literacy levels (Levels 1 and 2) live in low income households.³

Comparatively, only 8% of adults at the highest literacy levels (Levels 4 and 5) live in low income households.³



High School Graduation Rates in Ontario

In 2016, the high school graduation rate had increased to 86.5% in Ontario. However, this still means that 13.5% of young people did not complete their high school education.^{5.1}

As well, of all Ontarians aged 25 to 64, 10.4% have not attained their high school diploma.^{5.2}



Grade 10 Literacy Test Results

The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) measures whether high school students are meeting the minimum standard for literacy. Successful completion of the literacy test is one of the requirements to earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.⁴

In 2016-2017, 81% of all Grade 10 students who wrote the OSSLT were successful; 19% were unsuccessful.⁴

When looking at success rates in academic versus applied course types, there is a large difference in success with the OSSLT; 92% of students taking academic level courses passed the literacy test, while only 44% of students taking applied courses were successful.⁴

"In my literacy class, I'm getting the help I've always needed. I'm doing better than I ever have in the past. I plan to get my GED and get a better job for myself down the road."



Literacy and Health

The impact of low literacy levels on health is a very serious issue. Canadians with the lowest levels of literacy are more than twice as likely to be in poor health compared to Canadians with higher literacy skills.⁶

"Since going to a literacy program, it is much easier to cope with life and I don't know how I survived with the education that I had. I can figure things out for myself and I don't have to ask so many questions any more."



Literacy and Employment

Skills levels are also strongly co-related with successful employment outcomes. Canadians with low literacy skills are more than twice as likely to be unemployed than those with higher level literacy skills.^{7.1}

Further, educational attainment is strongly related to employment. In 2016, only 55% of Canadians aged 25-64 who did not complete high school were employed. Conversely, the employment rate was 82% for those who had obtained a college or university credential.^{7.2}

Research has also found that approximately 45% of Canadians in precarious or “no contract” work have not attained an educational credential beyond a high school diploma.^{7.3}

“Thanks to my new-found skills and self-esteem, I feel more capable to go out and find a great job that I am worthy of.”



Jobs of the Future

People with low literacy skills may be particularly disadvantaged in the labour market of the future. Robotics and artificial intelligence are dramatically changing the workplace and increasing the demand for high-skilled workers.⁸

While the demand for high-skilled workers is growing (up 19% since 1998, according to Statistics Canada), the need for low-skilled workers is declining (down 11% over the same period).⁸

Based on Canada's levels of literacy and numeracy, many Canadians do not currently have the literacy, numeracy and digital skills needed for the jobs of the future.⁸



Literacy and Employment

It is critically important to offer educational programs in Canada's prisons. Correctional Services Canada reports that approximately 75% of offenders admitted to federal custody had an education level of less than grade 12.^{9.1}

Correctional Services Canada further notes that when educational programming is provided to inmates, it results in reduced recidivism, better release outcomes, and improved future employment opportunities.^{9.2}



Digital Literacy

An international survey measured “Problem Solving in a Technology Rich Environment” (PR-TRE). In our province, 44% of Ontarians scored at the lowest levels (at, or below, PR-TRE Level 1), while 38% scored at Level 2 or 3 (the two highest levels), and 18% did not respond to the survey.^{10.1}

Currently, almost 100% of the population under 45 years of age are using technology and computers. But, even with rising digital literacy, higher literacy skills are still needed to see positive outcomes in life such as self-reported health and political efficacy.^{10.2}



Literacy and Civic Engagement

Positive political efficacy dramatically rises with increased education and skills. The level of political efficacy was measured by whether people disagree or agree with the statement “People like me don’t have any say about what the government does.”¹¹

Among Canadians with less than a high-school diploma, just 32% report positive political efficacy, compared to 60% of people who have obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher.¹¹

“Literacy has helped me to read the newspaper. Now I am able to give my own opinions about what is going on in the world.”



Literacy and the Economy

Higher levels of literacy lead to a stronger Canadian economy, an increased gross domestic product, an enhanced competitive advantage, improved workplace safety, and a more productive workforce.^{12.1}

Literacy also provides a substantial socio-economic return on investment. There is a strong evidence that investment in literacy can benefit the Canadian economy by: reducing costs in areas such as social assistance, healthcare, and justice; and it results in increased productivity and earnings. The 2011 report, *From Poverty to Prosperity: Literacy’s Impact on Canada’s Economic Success*, placed the annual savings in social assistance alone of raising every Canadian adult to Level 3 literacy at \$542 million.^{12.2}



An Overview of Ontario’s Literacy and Basic Skills Program

The evidence is clear. There is a strong need to increase literacy and numeracy levels in Ontario. In response, Ontario’s Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), through Employment Ontario, funds the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program. The program serves adults who want to improve their literacy and numeracy skills to achieve their goals of post-secondary education and training, employment, apprenticeship, secondary school credit, or independence.

The LBS program is delivered by three sectors: community-based agencies, school boards, and colleges. It supports literacy upgrading for adults in four streams: English language, Aboriginal, Francophone, and Deaf. Each of these sectors and streams brings their unique strengths, and together they effectively serve the diverse needs of adult literacy learners in Ontario. Literacy instruction is free and is provided through a variety of methods including one-to-one tutoring, small group and classroom instruction, and online learning, via e-Channel.

In order to help adult learners meet their goals, Ontario's literacy agencies work closely with diverse community stakeholders (such as Ontario Works, social services, Employment Services, other education providers, employers, community agencies, and more).

Currently, LBS educators are working collaboratively with MTCU to strengthen Ontario's adult education system. The process has been designed to address many of the issues raised in the LBS evaluation report, including but not limited to enhanced funding, performance management, curriculum design, and rebranding, marketing, and awareness.

For more information:

- Read MTCU's "Overview of Literacy and Basic Skills" www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/programs/lbs.html
- Visit the "Adult Learning" section of MTCU's website to find your local LBS agency and learn more about the Literacy and Basic Skills program www.ontario.ca/page/adult-learning

In "Literacy: Why It Matters", we hope that we've clearly demonstrated that literacy strongly intersects with issues Ontarians care deeply about: employment, health, poverty, the economy, civic engagement, and more.

This publication is freely available on Community Literacy of Ontario's website ([www](http://www.communityliteracyofontario.ca)).

communityliteracyofontario.ca) along with more detailed sourcing and links to the cited research reports. CLO encourages readers to share "Literacy: Why It Matters" to raise awareness and understanding of this critical

"I went to a literacy program because I was tired of people telling me that I was stupid and that I didn't know anything. I guess I proved them all wrong! I am doing better now and I am proud of myself."

Sources

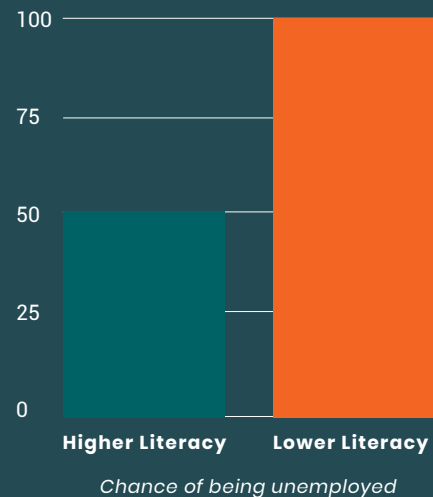
For more info, visit: www.communityliteracyofontario.ca

1. Skills in Canada: First Results from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). 2013. Statistics Canada. (Page 17).
2. Skills in Canada: First Results from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies. 2013. Statistics Canada. (Page 21).
3. Insights on Canadian Society: The association between skills and low income. Statistics Canada. February 2016. Andrew Heisz, Geranda Notten, Jerry Situ.
4. Infographic: Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test, 2017 Results. 2017. The Education Quality and Accountability Office.
- 5.1 2016 Graduation Rates Across the Province. May 8, 2017. Ontario Ministry of Education.
- 5.2 Education Highlight Tables, 2016 Census. November 23, 2017. Statistics Canada.
6. Special Report: Canada's literacy and numeracy challenge worsens. December 12, 2013. TD Economics. Craig Alexander and Jonathan Bendiner. (Page 7).
- 7.1 OECD Skills Outlook 2013: First Results from the Survey of Adult Skills. 2013. OECD Publishing.
- 7.2 Education indicators in Canada: An international perspective. Statistics Canada. December 2017.
- 7.3 The Health and Social Dimensions of Adult Skills in Canada: Findings from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies. Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. 2018. Linda Jacobsen and Andrea Long. (Page 77).
8. Canada's Top Barriers to Competitiveness in 2016. February 2016. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce. (Pages 14-15).
- 9.1 Offender Education Programs and Services. February 2015. Correctional Services Canada.
- 9.2 2014-15 Departmental Performance Report. 2015. Correctional Services Canada.
- 10.1 Skills in Canada: First Results from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies. 2013. Statistics Canada. (Page 84).
- 10.2 The Health and Social Dimensions of Adult Skills in Canada: Findings from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies. Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. 2018. Linda Jacobsen and Andrea Long. (Page 29).
11. The Health and Social Dimensions of Adult Skills in Canada: Findings from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies. Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. 2018. Linda Jacobsen and Andrea Long. (Pages 24-25, 47).
- 12.1 Smarten Up: It's Time to Build Essential Skills. June 2015. The Canada West Foundation, Centre for Human Capital Policy. Janet Lane and T. Scott Murray.
- 12.2 From Poverty to Prosperity: Literacy's Impact on Canada's Economic Success. 2011. Canadian Literacy and Learning Network.

Literacy and Employment

Skills levels are strongly co-related with successful employment outcomes.

Canadians with low literacy skills are more than twice as likely to be unemployed than those with higher level literacy skills.



Find out more about the state of literacy in Ontario: Get CLO's updated 2018 **"More Than Words Can Say – Literacy: Why It Matters"** today.

Literacy and Jobs of the future

The demand for high-skilled workers is up 19% since 1998 but the need for low-skilled workers is down 11% over the same period.

Based on Canada's levels of literacy and numeracy, many Canadians do not currently have the literacy, numeracy and digital skills needed for the jobs of the future.

Find out more about the state of literacy in Ontario: Get CLO's updated 2018 **"More Than Words Can Say – Literacy: Why It Matters"** today.



FROM COLLEGE STUDENT TO COLLEGE STAFFER

BY COLLEGE SECTOR COMMITTEE FOR ADULT UPGRADING

“If I didn’t do the upgrading, I wouldn’t be here right now.”

Marco D’Intino was tired of the employment rollercoaster ride he was on as a machinist for 20 years. Although work wasn’t hard to find for someone with his experience, he faced being laid off every five years or so when he worked for companies involved in the mining industry. He knew he had to make a career change to have more stability; but stepping out of his comfort zone to go back to school came with some trepidation.

“It was a tough decision because you’re pretty much putting your family in a financial situation,” recalls Marco. But once he spoke to faculty in the Power Engineering Technology program at Georgian College, and realized he could combine his machining experience with formal education to boost his career, he jumped at the opportunity.

There was only one initial issue. Marco needed to upgrade his math skills and, quite frankly, he was never a big fan of the subject. He looked to Academic Upgrading (now called Academic and Career Preparation) at Georgian’s Owen Sound campus for help.

“It opened the doors for me. Wide open. First of all, it gave me confidence because, throughout high school, I really sucked at math,” he says with a chuckle. “The teacher was able to lay it out so I understood it and I had no more issues. Let me tell you, when you’re doing power engineering, you’re doing above and beyond mathematics. You are more into the sciences.”

Marco is the first person in his family to attend college and, while he didn’t enjoy school when he was younger, he thrived in his math upgrading class and went on to graduate with honours from the Power Engineering program. He is now TSSA (Technical Standards and Safety Authority) certified as a Power Engineer.

“Without the help of academic upgrading staff and instructors, I would not be where I am today. They not only offered me a hand up, which allowed me to go to college, but also provided me with the positive support I needed to succeed.”

Marco didn’t just become fully invested in his new career; he got

involved at school, too. In his first year of the two-year program, he became an Ambassador of the program, taking potential students on tours of the Owen Sound campus and becoming a mentor to many. Marco was also voted by his peers to represent Power Engineering students at the Dean’s Council meetings and was voted in as president of the Georgian College Power Engineering Club.

In his final year, he became a part-time Academic Technologist within the Power Engineering Technology program and, after graduating in August 2018, he was offered a position as a part-time instructor in the program.

Looking back, he knows taking math through Academic and Career Preparation was the best thing he could have done for himself and his family.

“There’s no limit to where you can go once you do it,” he says. “Let’s be honest, if I didn’t do upgrading, I wouldn’t be here right now.”

NAZIFA'S STORY:

FROM UNEMPLOYED REFUGEE CLAIMANT TO GAINFULLY EMPLOYED PERMANENT RESIDENT

BY OTTAWA CARLETON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD'S LBS PROGRAM



Nazifa came to Canada as a refugee claimant in September 2012 with her two children ages 6 and 12 years old. She was sheltered at Reception House and felt compelled to immediately help out so she also started volunteering. She found an apartment and registered at the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) for English as Second Language (ESL) classes while she continued to volunteer at the Reception House until January 2014.

Nazifa progressed from ESL into the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program because her listening and speaking skills had outpaced her reading and writing. The LBS Academic Upgrading Program focused on improving her skills until she was ready to enter the LBS Personal Support Worker (PSW) Preparation course in September 2014. Nazifa also continued to volunteer at Reception House. She was soon hired part-time as a cook for the residents and she continues to work there to this day.

Nazifa completed the LBS PSW Prep course in January 2015 and entered the PSW Certificate Course at OCDSB Adult High School where she graduated in June 2015. She found employment working in this field as well as working as a cook at the Family Reception Centre. She was proudly able to go off of Ontario Works financial support. She continued to take courses to upgrade her reading and writing skills in LBS. Nazifa proved to be a hard-working, eager student who expressed an interest in working in the Adaptive Learning program within the OCDSB which is an LBS workplace training program for adults with a developmental disability. She was encouraged by her teachers to apply to be on the supply list as an instructor assistant. Nazifa continued her studies, worked at the Reception House part time and picked up supply hours with Adaptive Learning Program whenever she could.

It wasn't long before she was hired first as a term employee and then

in a permanent position as an instructor assistant with the OCDSB Adaptive Learning Program in September 2018.

Nazifa has been an excellent role model for her students, her co-workers and her children. Her son worked many hours at Tim Hortons while in high school. He graduated in June 2018 and is able to pay the balance of his tuition at Algonquin College after receiving a grant from OSAP.

Nazifa feels her time at Albert Street in the ESL and LBS programs gave her the confidence, sense of belonging and heightened self-esteem to find jobs, continue to improve her language and employability skills and to fight for Permanent Residency in Canada, but most importantly, to secure a safe and healthy life for her children in Canada. She obtained her Permanent Resident status in November 2017.

MARK'S SUCCESS STORY

BY BARRIE LITERACY COUNCIL

Mark was 26 when he came to the Literacy and Essential Skills (LES) Program. He came from a large farm family and had been home schooled but had not earned any credits toward his Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

Mark came to us after being referred from the Barrie Literacy Council where he had been preparing for an unwavering OSSD goal. Starting there in 2014, he diligently worked with a tutor, studied independently and participated in small groups. Mark's confidence in his abilities as well as his skills grew to the point where he could successfully transition to LES. He started in the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) adult upgrading class in September 2016 and stayed until May 2017. While in the upgrading class with his instructor, Joanne McDowell, he upgraded his math and English skills and achieved an online correspondence credit in Learning Strategies while completing all of the requirements of junior and senior Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). In May 2017, Mark went on to complete the last required courses for his OSSD in the SCDSB online platform of courses.



While attending the Barrie Literacy Council and the SCDSB and working on credits, Mark was employed part-time as a cleaner at a local mall and held an active role in the Barrie Pipes and Drums Band. His attendance was near perfect and his work ethic and dedication to his goal was a model for all to follow. Mark is now employed full time as the night manager at a local restaurant but has plans to one day apply to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Mark achieved his goal of an OSSD on June 28 and was further honoured by receiving an "Opportunity" award from MP Alex Nuttal.

THE ROAD TO BECOMING A MEDICAL SECRETARY

I was referred to the Centre Moi j'apprends in April 2011 by the Employment Services Centre in Rockland. During my first meeting with the centre's adult educators, I told them about my goal of registering in the medical office clerk training course at the Centre d'éducation et de formation de l'est de l'Ontario (CEFEO), which was being offered in October of that year.

By attending courses at the centre, I was able to improve my knowledge in communications, numeracy and computer skills. What is more, all of this helped me to realize that my dream was attainable, and without my even noticing, my self-confidence increased.

As planned, I started my courses at the CEFEO in October, and graduated in June 2012. Through my course, I completed an internship with the Clarence-Rockland Family Health Team. It went so well! A position became available as the internship was ending; I was interviewed, and got the job. I have been working as a medical secretary now for six years. I am very happy at work, and owe it all to the Centre Moi j'apprends, and its partnership with the CEFEO.

Linda Demers